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Advancement of women

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 29 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward information regarding the joint plan of actions of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United Nations Children's Fund aimed at implementing in the Republic the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under items 60 and 62 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

* A/61/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 29 August 2006 from the Permanent Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Joint action plan of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and UNICEF have signed a country programme action plan for 2005-2009.

Under the action plan, UNICEF will allocate $9.26 million from its funds and will also make efforts to raise another $8.56 million from additional sources to carry out joint programmes during the period 2005-2009 in Uzbekistan, with a view to strengthening the country's capacity to implement its national priorities and commitments with regard to guaranteeing the rights of children, young people and women and creating a favourable and protective environment in which they can live, grow and develop.

Through the implementation of the country programme, children, young people and women in 15 selected priority districts in six regions (representing approximately 10 per cent of the country's total population) will receive improved access to quality basic health care, education, child protection and HIV/AIDS prevention services. It is planned that the experience gained in the practical achievement of the objectives set will subsequently be disseminated across the country.

It is proposed that families and young people in the priority districts will be given the opportunity to take greater responsibility for their own well-being and for demanding quality basic services more effectively, with support from local government authorities (*makhallyas*), which are to be granted significant powers.

In addition, in order to harmonize the laws of Uzbekistan more fully with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, there are plans to draft new laws and to amend existing laws.

These activities will help to foster a better understanding of the socio-economic, political, gender and cultural barriers hindering the realization of the rights of mothers, children and young people. This, in turn, will contribute to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and the achievement of results under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), particularly in terms of the harmonization of existing laws with international standards and principles of good governance.

In 2004, with support from the Asian Development Bank, Uzbekistan prepared a strategic document on raising living standards. It is the first document of its kind and sets forth the Government's long-term vision with regard to development issues.

Thus, the 2005-2009 country programme supplements and supports the efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan to achieve sustainable development. These efforts are described in the President's annual programme, which is aimed at improving the social support system for vulnerable sectors of the population. Under the country programme, direct assistance will be provided to strengthen Government initiatives to enhance teacher qualifications, ensure the health of the younger generation, empower women, mothers and children, introduce healthy lifestyles in the family, strengthen the role of the *makhallyas* and promote the principles of kindness and charity.

There are plans to increase the national capacity to monitor and analyse current social trends, so that the Government's resources and capabilities can be more precisely focused on the poor and the vulnerable, taking gender criteria into account.

Uzbekistan and UNICEF already have practical experience in joint country programme implementation. However, in the past, their efforts were focused on increasing the child survival rate, educating young people on healthy lifestyles and the risk of HIV/AIDS, increasing young people's participation in civic life, promoting the "child-friendly school" concept, addressing the problem of microelement deficiency, reducing the risk of children having to go into children's homes, and providing assistance to people living in areas with unfavourable environmental conditions.

In addition, efforts have been made to promote the use nationwide of the internationally accepted definition of the term "live birth", to support safe motherhood initiatives and initiatives to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, and to increase the percentage of babies who are fed exclusively on breastmilk up to the age of 6 months.

As a result of the joint action that has been taken, 13 maternity hospitals have been certified "child-friendly", pupils in over 10,000 schools have been taught the importance of consuming iodized salt to prevent iodine deficiency disorders and some 80 per cent of all children aged between 6 and 59 months have received vitamin A supplements. Vaccination coverage has remained above 95 per cent, the country has been certified polio-free, and the State has assumed responsibility for the purchase of vaccines for routine vaccinations.

Some 2,500 children have received preschool education in *makhallya* day-care centres, where the teaching methods employed are designed to stimulate early child development. A national policy of education for all has been adopted; over 80,000 pupils in five regions of the country are enrolled in "child-friendly" schools; 60,000 pupils in grades 1 to 4 have improved their knowledge of hygiene, and sanitary conditions have been improved in 80 schools.

Across the country, 14 youth-friendly centres have been opened, which now serve 100,000 young people and teach them about the skills needed for healthy behaviour and development. Over 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers know about ways to prevent HIV/AIDS and lead healthy lifestyles.

Thanks to a grant from the Government of Japan, 300,000 people in the Aral Sea region are benefiting from projects to improve mother and child health, water quality, sanitation and hygiene. An epidemiological study conducted in 2003 showed that the level of water pollution in the region had fallen from 9.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent and that the incidence of diarrhoea among children had fallen by one third.